

Written by Mike Honda
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On Wednesday, July 22, the House Committee on Appropriations approved, with my vote of support, the FY 2010 Defense Appropriations bill. This bill will not only provide for the readiness of our armed forces and ensure the wellbeing of our courageous servicemembers and their dedicated families; it will also help fulfill a long overdue promise made by the Federal government regarding former Defense Department land on Mt. Umunhum.

In 1986, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) purchased lands that include the former Almaden Air Force Station (AFS) atop Mt. Umunhum in Santa Clara County from the Federal government. Prior to the transfer of ownership to MROSD, the Federal government acknowledged that the site was contaminated by previous Department of Defense activities, and gave assurances that they would remediate the property. Since then, cleanup has proceeded at a painfully slow pace. This inadequate response has allowed toxic materials on site to become an increasing danger to public health and the environment.

Per my request and with the collaboration of my dear friend, Representative Zoe Lofgren, the FY 2010 Defense Appropriations bill passed by the Appropriations Committee allocates \$4 million to the renewed remediation efforts to be conducted by the Army Corps of Engineers. The appropriations process is far from complete, including House consideration of the bill scheduled for next week. With the combined support of both our California Senators, I am optimistic that these funds will be realized and we will be closer to alleviating the health and environmental impacts on the grounds, as well as finally allowing site access for the public's enjoyment as originally intended over two decades ago.

On July 11, the *San Jose Mercury News* printed an [editorial](#) on this effort.